

Master odells 541

Chapter 541

Sylvia smiled back "Goodbye." Shortly after that, they arrived at the gate. Sylvia turned and returned upstairs upon making sure that they had entered Odell's car. She changed her clothes, put on a coat and a scarf, then she went to her car and proceeded to drive to the venue where the seminar was hosted.

Meanwhile, in the other car that was already speeding down the lane, the driver was focused on driving. In the backseat were Liam, Isabel, and Odell. Liam was sitting quietly by himself while Isabel was propped on Odell's lap. She was staring intently at the snow outside when she abruptly turned around and stared at Odell.

Odell noticed her staring at him and asked, "What's wrong?"

Isabel asked with a tight grimace, "Are you bullying my Mommy again?"

Odell frowned and answered, "Not that I know of."

He had not seen her for almost a month by now, so he could not do anything to her even if he wanted to.

Isabel narrowed her eyes suspiciously. "Why is it that every time you come to pick us up, Mommy tells me that she can't go with us because she has something else planned?" Odell fell silent for a couple of seconds, then explained, "Maybe she really is busy."

Isabel pouted. "Okay."

She turned back to the window, immediately entranced by the snow falling from the sky outside.

Odell stole a glance at Liam who was sitting beside him.

The boy was seated upright with his eyes gazing forward stoutly. There was not a trace of emotion on his face, so he could not possibly decipher what was on his mind. It would seem that he did not tell Isabel about their parent's divorce. The boy was quite mature for his age.

Sylvia arrived at the venue of the seminar shortly after that.

It was in a hotel near the academy. The venue was very cozy, and many teachers had already arrived.

Christopher was here as well. Upon seeing Sylvia, he immediately went up to her with a sizable crowd following him as well.

Sylvia greeted everybody with a warm and infectious smile, then she sat down next to Christopher. While waiting for everybody to arrive, they began making small talk.

Meanwhile, Sylvia ate snacks and listened to their conversation,

Suddenly, there was a commotion outside.

Sylvia inspected the scene curiously and saw a group of young female teachers flocking towards the entrance of the venue. The hall echoed with their rabid cries.

“Oh my God! My heart!”

“Mr. Carter is so handsome!”

Upon hearing the name “Mr. Carter”, Sylvia understood that it was Thomas arriving.

Christopher was irked by this inappropriate scene and cleared his throat a few times.

Immediately after that, two teachers of considerable seniority went to the crowd and got them to disperse. Shortly after that, Thomas’s tall and slender figure appeared before their eyes. He was wearing a fitted suit paired with dress pants. With one hand tucked inside a pocket, he approached them with graceful steps like that of a model floating down a runway.

Sylvia waved at him.

Thomas noticed her and walked straight toward her.

The seat next to Sylvia happened to be vacant, so he proceeded to sit down beside her.

All of the female teachers continued keeping an eye on Thomas.

Christopher swept a glance around the hall, then he grabbed the microphone and announced, “Everyone is here. Now let’s jump straight to the topic.”

Finally, the venue descended into silence.

After that, the teachers in charge of hosting the seminar took the microphone and gave everyone a brief rundown of the day’s itinerary

The seminar, as its name suggested, was to encourage the participating teachers to exchange their experiences and serve as a platform for academic discussions. The structure of the seminar was rather casual, and participants were encouraged to speak their minds. To be precise, it was more apt to call it a social gathering than a seminar.

Chapter 542

With that, they entered the phase of free-form discussions. Many teachers rose from their seats and split off into groups of three to five. Several teachers went straight for Sylvia.

Needless to say, Thomas remained the most popular one by a wide margin. Many young female teachers gathered around him immediately after the host laid out the itinerary. One of the teachers asked him inquisitively, “Mr. Carter, I heard that you teach piano. What do you usually teach?”

Thomas answered blankly, “Piano.”

There was an awkward silence. Sylvia was sitting close by and heard Thomas’s curt answer, so she glanced over.

The surrounding teachers seemed rather at a loss for words, but they refused to give up and asked him again, “Do you only teach them piano in class? Are there any other things you teach them?”

To this, Thomas grunted an odd response, “Hm.” The teachers were completely speechless.

Sylvia darted another look at Thomas. He was seated very gracefully and had the same distant look both on his expression and in his eyes. Chances were that he was not interested in talking to them. Nevertheless, the surrounding teachers refused to leave. One of them suddenly suggested, "Mr. Carter, you must be very good at playing the piano. There's a piano right over there. Would you mind playing a piece for us?" "Yeah, Mr. Carter, we'd love to see you play something for us." In time, all the seminar attendees were drawn toward the mysterious piano teacher, perhaps because his crew of rabid fans were being too loud and attracted attention.

Many of them looked on with anticipation, eager to see Thomas play the piano.

However, he wore a frown and still did not utter a single word.

The venue was suddenly filled with silence.

Christopher quickly sensed that something was off and remarked with an earnest smile, "Mr. Carter, it seems like everyone wants to see you play the piano. Please do oblige us." Thomas looked at Sylvia, and she smiled at him. He suddenly asked her, "Do you want to hear me play too?" Sylvia did not understand why he had to specifically ask her, but she answered with a quick nod, "Yeah,"

He abruptly rose and walked toward the grand piano set on one side of the venue. Then, he sat in front of the piano and rested his slender, delicate fingers on top of the black and white

piano keys. Everyone held their breaths and watched him silently.

Sylvia was staring at him with a fixed look too. The first note rang across the air. The melody was smooth and enticing, immediately drawing in the collective attention of everyone present and fully immersing them in the music. His fingers danced effortlessly along the keys like water flowing down a creek. The music itself was harmonious, alternating between high and low tempo, switching from a somber mood to a cheerful waltz now and then.

The listeners felt their ears cleansed by the music. It was nothing short of wonderful.

By the time he finished the piece, everyone was still intoxicated by the music and demanded more.

One of the teachers cheered, "Mr. Carter, let's do an encore."

Thomas looked at Sylvia.

Suddenly feeling his gaze on her, Sylvia froze for a moment before subconsciously looking away to avoid his stare. Meanwhile, everyone else was cheering for an encore from Thomas the pianist. Unfortunately, Thomas seemed less receptive than they would hope for. At last, Christopher announced authoritatively, "Alright, Mr. Carter has entertained us enough. Let's stop trying to get him to play more. We have other things to get to, so let's get back to it."

There was a general murmur of disappointment, then everyone dispersed and went back to their discussions

Thomas rose and walked back to his seat as well.

Sylvia kept her head bowed to avoid looking at him, but she managed to catch a glimpse of him sitting down from the corner of her eye.

Many teachers were having different conversations and holding all sorts of discussions.

Sylvia was about to look up when she suddenly heard Thomas's low and mellow voice say, "The song I played was for you." Sylvia was startled by this remark and spun around to look at him.

Chapter 543

He was seated in a very princely manner with his hands resting on the table. A cold gleam of ice shone in his eyes, but he was not looking at her. Perhaps she had misheard?

Sylvia pursed her lips and wondered if she should ask if he was talking to her just now.

Her opportunity was lost when several teachers approached her and asked her enthusiastically, "Ms. Sylvia, would you mind sharing some of your insights in painting with us?"

Sylvia dismissed the idea of asking Thomas and smiled back at them. "Okay." She took the time to talk with them. Soon, she was entranced by the conversation to a point where she no longer noticed the way the man looked at her only a short distance from her.

Before even realizing it, Sylvia had chatted with them until it was noon.

They only wrapped things up after Christopher informed them that it was time for them to get something to eat.

Thomas was still sitting near her. Sylvia walked with him and several teachers towards the dining room where they had lunch.

On the way to the dining room, he kept a respectful distance from her just like the other teachers did

Upon reaching the dining room, they found an occupied table and sat down. He was seated right next to her, but they did not exchange a single word throughout the entire meal. He had a cold and unapproachable temperament as he always did. Sylvia heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed to her that she must have misheard what he said to her just now.

After lunch, Sylvia and the others returned to the venue to continue their discussion. It was around evening when Christopher announced the conclusion of the seminar. Since it was also dinner time, he had made reservations at a nearby restaurant and invited everyone to dine with him.

Everyone went to the exit in an orderly manner.

Sylvia walked to Christopher and said to him, "President, I have children at home waiting for me, so I'm afraid I won't be joining you for dinner." Christopher did not try to pressure her and was very understanding of her circumstance." Alright." Shortly after that, they stepped out of the hotel. What came into view was a world covered in white. Thick layers of snow clad everything. It was on the trees, all over the asphalt, and on

top of cars. Snow was still falling from the sky Christopher expressed thoughtfully, "Sylvia, be careful driving on the road."

“Alright,” Sylvia answered before turning to Thomas to inform him, “Thomas, I won’t be having dinner with everyone. I need to head back first.”

Thomas peered at her and answered in a vaguely expressive voice, “Be careful on the road.”

“I will. You be careful on the way home after dinner too.”

“Hm.”

With that, Sylvia went straight to the parking lot.

Thomas stood still and watched her.

Several female teachers were eyeing him the entire time as well. Noticing that he did not leave yet, they immediately went up to him and asked, “Mr. Carter, aren’t you leaving yet?”

“We’re going to drive to the restaurant. Why don’t you get in the car with us as well?” Thomas withdrew his gaze from the direction of the parking lot and answered briskly, “I won’t be joining dinner. Something came up at home.”

With that, he turned and strode off very quickly, barely giving time to the teachers to elicit a response.

Sylvia quickly drove back home, To her surprise, Isabel and Liam had returned. They were still wearing the same outfit from this morning and were playing in the living room.

Isabel was lying next to Aunt Tonya watching television while Liam was seated next to them with a toy in his hand. Upon noticing Sylvia returning, the two of them turned toward her in perfect synchronization. “Mommy, you’re back!” Isabel jumped off the sofa and ran to her. Liam rose as well. Sylvia kissed and hugged them in turn before asking, “Why did you two come back so early today?”

Chapter 544

Isabel trumpeted, “The weather is bad today, so baddie says it’s not safe for us to be outside and sent us back home earlier.”

Hearing this, Sylvia nodded with understanding and asked, “Did you have a good time today?”

“Mimin, we went shopping with baddie and ate a lot of delicious food, then we bought a bunch of fun stuff. Oh yeah, Mommy, we even bought you a gift!”

With that, Isabel turned and trotted inside. Sylvia observed her curiously. Soon, Isabel returned carrying a large box in hand.

Sylvia asked with intrigue, “What’s in there?”

“You’ll know when you open it!” Isabel said as she handed her the box.

After taking it, Sylvia went to the couch and moved the box onto her lap to open it. It contained a music box with a crystal ball attached, and it was glowing luminously like a mysterious orb from a fantasy world.

Inside the crystal ball were two little children sitting together. It was apparent that the two children inside were carved in the likeness of Isabel and Liam. Liam's figure was stoic and cool, while Isabel's was grinning from ear to ear.

It was an adorable trinket.

Sylvia's eyes glowed as she slicked the switch.

The music box immediately played a melodic and soft rhythm, while flakes of snow spun around inside the crystal ball. At the same time, the two tiny figures inside the crystal ball began spinning around on an axis.

It was a scene filled with warmth and beauty. Sylvia smiled happily upon witnessing this, then she looked to her side and saw Isabel and Liam staring at her expectantly. She threw her arms around them with a grateful smile and thanked them, "Thank you, Mommy loves this gift."

"Hehe." Isabel grinned and added, "Mommy, it was the stinky baddie who helped us make this. We didn't even know we could have our figures put inside."

Sylvia suddenly frowned. "Oh yeah, the stinky baddie bought gifts for us too." Sylvia tried to keep a calm appearance and asked with a pleasant smile, "What did your Daddy buy for you?" Liam showed off the toy in his hand. It was a quirky toy that could have its shape tweaked by hand.

Sylvia patted his head and turned to Isabel who looked at her with her pearly eyes and suddenly held out her hands. She let Sylvia look at her bare wrists.

A pair of star-shaped diamond bracelets that she wore on both of her arms immediately caught Sylvia's attention. But that was not all.

She craned her neck upward to reveal her neck. Sylvia caught a glimmer of something shining and gently tugged at her collar to reveal a shiny star-shaped diamond necklace. There was a logo etched on the necklace, proving that it was a luxury brand. This set had to be worth millions.

Sylvia jerked her lips in a repulsed manner. Isabel asked with pride, "Mommy, what do you think about these stars? Aren't they shiny?" At a young age, she had no concept of money and only liked it for its star-shaped design. "They're nice," Sylvia complimented before inquiring, "Did your Daddy buy it for you?" "Yeah, he asked me if I had anything I wanted. I thought about it for a long time and couldn't think of anything, so he took us to this shop where we bought this." Oh well, Isabel and Liam were his rightful children, so he could splurge on them as much as he wanted.

Sylvia patted Isabel's head and kept quiet. That was when the child suddenly regarded her with an intrigued look. Sylvia asked suspiciously, "What's wrong?" Isabel smiled and revealed, "Mommy, we picked out a necklace for you too." Sylvia was bewildered by this. Isabel looked at Liam and motioned, "Bro, show Mommy."

Chapter 545

Liam took out a delicate purple wooden box from his pocket.

Sylvia opened it and saw a sunflower-shaped diamond necklace inside. It was crafted with attention to detail and was breathtakingly beautiful. She pursed her lips.

Isabel stared at her and asked, "Mommy, we picked this out for you. Do you like it?" Sylvia strained a forced smile. "I love it."

"Put it on! Can we go outside and build a snowman after this?" "Alright, you two wait for me here. I'll take the music box upstairs for you first." "Uh-huh." Sylvia picked up the necklace and the music box and went upstairs to her room. She put the crystal ball on the small cabinet next to the bed. She then stashed the necklace inside a drawer in the dresser. Although Isabel and Liam were the ones who had picked the necklace out, Odell must have been the one who paid for it. Clearly, it must have cost a fortune. Having divorced him, it was not right for her to wear the things he paid for. After putting it away, she quickly went downstairs.

Isabel had already run out to the yard to feel the snow. Liam was standing silently by the door and waiting for Sylvia as instructed.

Sylvia took Liam's hand and led him into the yard where he made snowballs with Isabel.

Just outside the gate, there was a black car parked underneath the shade of trees. There was a man seated by himself in the back seat. He had the side windows rolled down, and chilly gusts of wind would blow into the car from time to time.

There was a tall wall surrounding the house which cut off his view of the yard, but he could hear the peals of laughter coming from the opposite side of the wall.

The cries of Isabel calling for her brother and the occasional shouts of their mother could be heard over the wall.

Sylvia would call out for Isabel and Liam from time to time.

Although Liam's voice could not be heard, one could vaguely make out the picture in the yard based on Isabel's cries and tell that Liam was helping her make snowballs. It seemed that the trio of mother and children was having a great time.

The cold wind was still blowing.

(The man leaned against the back of the seat and stared at nothing in particular in front of him. He wore a thin smile lingering on the corner of his lips.

When the day turned dark, there was no more laughter to be heard in the yard. All there was was the whistling of the wind blowing. It was only then that he finally instructed, "Let's

The driver started the car immediately.

S

The days went by very quickly without any eventful happenings. In the blink of an eye, it was the start of Isabel and Liam's winter holiday.

That morning, Sylvia made a reservation at a hotpot restaurant.

In the evening, she went to the kindergarten with Aunt Tonya to pick Isabel and Liam up. From there, they went to the hotpot restaurant, Sylvia ordered various vegetables and meat that Isabel, Liam, and

Aunt Tonya liked. She also ordered fruit juice and some desserts to be included in the meal as well before handing the menu back to the waiter.

Since they were here early, the food was served rather quickly. Sylvia immediately distributed the utensils to everyone and made the hotpot for the children.

Liam ate slowly and with grace while Isabel went on a spree. They finished their meal relatively quickly. Isabel was the first to finish. She leaned back in satisfaction and massaged her stomach while burping. Liam gently set down his utensils and patted his mouth dry with a piece of tissue, not forgetting to help wipe Isabel's mouth too. Sylvia and Aunt Tonya were full in no time too. Liam blurted out of nowhere, "Mommy, I'm starting to miss Great-grandma." Something gleamed in Isabel's eyes and she chimed, "Me too. I miss Geat-grandma. Mommy, let's go to see Great-grandma tomorrow."

Sylvia checked the date. It was Tuesday and the next day was Wednesday, so she figured that Odell probably had work tomorrow. After some brief consideration, she decided at last, "Alright, I'll take you two to see your great

grandmother tomorrow."

Chapter 546

later that night, after Sylvia put Isabel and Liam to bed, she went to the living room Aunt Tonya put her phone down when she saw Sylvia appearing and informed her, "Sylvia, I just talked to Sebastian. He said ever since the divorce, Odell has pretty much always been in the office as long as it is a working day. Sometimes, he even spends the night in his office instead of going home. Even at this hour, he's still at the office, so there's no chance that he's going to be home tomorrow" Sylvia smiled. "Alright."

Since he was not going to be home, she could bring Isabel and Liam to see Madam Carter

Meanwhile, in Carter Tower, in the central district of the city, the lights were still turned on inside the office on the top floor

After all his work was done, Odell leaned against his chair and did some reading

Ding ding

His phone suddenly chimed. It was Sebastian calling him.

Odell put the phone to his ear.

"Sebastian, what's the matter?" he asked.

Sebastian cautiously whispered into the phone, "Sir, Tonya just called me to ask if you are at home tomorrow. I think she's asking for Ms. Sylvia. She might be coming around tomorrow with the kids to see the madam."

Odell sell silent for a moment before answering, "Got it."

He hung up. He set down the book and turned to look out the window and behold the night view of the snowing city.

There was looming darkness inside his eyes. It had been almost two months since their divorce, and even now, she was still unwilling to see him.

The next morning, Sylvia woke Isabel and Liam out of bed and had them change into a set of adorable winter coats. She then wrapped a scarf around them and gave them a hat to wear. After everything was set, she looked at Aunt Tonya, and they all went to Odell's place.

Sebastian knew that they were coming and kept the door open for them.

Sylvia went straight into the house with the kids and Aunt Tonya and went to Madam Carter's room.

Violet was still tasked with taking care of Madam Carter during the day. Sylvia greeted her and sat down on the chair by the bed.

Isabel took off her shoes and climbed onto the bed, then she plopped herself down next to Madam Carter while Liam sat down beside the bed.

Sylvia checked in with Violet. "Violet, how has Grandma been doing these few days?" Violet answered obligingly. "No worries, she's doing the same as she was before."

Sylvia nodded firmly. Isabel began babbling into Madam Carter's ears. She told her great-grandmother all sorts of stories, ranging from random gossip at the school to her outings with Liam, Sylvia, and Odell. Sylvia chuckled at the tales Isabel told, and Violet and Aunt Tonya were just as entertained. The atmosphere in the room was very wholesome. Meanwhile, outside the room, a tall man was leaning against the door. He crossed his arms and quietly listened to Isabel relaying her stories. He would also hear Sylvia snicker from time to time. Soon, a subtle smile formed on his lips.

Before they knew it, it was already noon. Isabel got tired of talking and was cuddling next to Madam Carter and yawning. Liam seemed to be fighting waves of drowsiness as well, and he struggled to keep his eyes open. Sylvia spoke softly to Madam Carter, "Grandma, I'll be taking Isabel and Liam home. We'll see you again sometime soon." With that, she and Aunt Tonya took Isabel and Liam out of the room. Inside the living room, Sebastian greeted them with a polite smile. He promptly informed Sylvia upon seeing her, "Ma'am, lunch is ready. You should let the young master and miss eat something before going home."

Sylvia returned a kind smile. "Thanks for the hospitality, Sebastian. But I think it's better that I don't linger too long since I'm already divorced with Odell, so we'll be heading back first."

Chapter 547

Sebastian darted a look at Aunt Tonya. "I..."

Aunt Tonya supplied, "Sebastian, Sylvia is right. We need to head back first. Don't worry about us, we'll be fine."

Sebastian glanced in a particular direction upstairs before giving in. "Okay." Sylvia said goodbye to him and walked out with Liam in her arms. Aunt Tonya followed closely with Isabel in her arms. They crossed the yard and went past the gate in no time.

Meanwhile, in a bedroom upstairs, a tall man was stalking them near the window. He had a deep and thoughtful look in his eyes as he stared at Sylvia in particular.

The sun cast its gentle rays on her slender back, the warmth of the sun making her seem especially delicate.

The academy would be having their winter break as well. This Thursday was going to be Sylvia's last class for this semester.

After getting up in the morning and having breakfast with the kids and Aunt Tonya, she hugged and kissed the two little guys in turn before informing them, "Liam, Isabel, Mommy is going to go to work and will be back in the evening. Now, both of you stay home and be good children. Listen to Aunt Tonya, got it?"

Isabel chirped, "Okay!" Liam echoed, "Yeah."

With that, Sylvia left. She drove to the academy, and the first thing she did was prepare for her classes, just like she always did. After everything was settled, she went to get lunch.

Since Thomas's office was next to hers, she sent him a text message. "Thomas, are you at the academy today?" She received a very quick answer. "Yeah."

She invited him to lunch. "Want to get something to eat?"

Thomas replied, "Sure."

Sylvia put on her coat and went out.

As soon as she stepped out of her office, out came Thomas from his office as well. He was wearing a long gray coat, and his figure was tall and stately like a statue. His appearance was dashing as always.

Sylvia smiled at him and asked, "What would you like to eat today?" Thomas walked next to her and remarked, "Anything you'd like." "Alright

Sylvia was in the mood for something on the heavier side today, so they went to a restaurant that served Thai food. She ordered several spicy dishes for herself and made sure to order

something lighter for Thomas, then she handed the menu back to the waiter. The air conditioning in the restaurant seemed to be set to a rather high temperature.

After sitting for just a while, Sylvia began to feel hot and sticky with sweat. She took off her coat and put it aside.

Thomas was feeling hot too, so he did the same and hung his coat on his chair.

Upon looking up, Sylvia's eyes landed on two sharp edges protruding from slightly below his shoulders, and she studied his defined and alluring collar bones. He was wearing a t-shirt with a loose collar, so whenever he leaned forward, one could get a glimpse of the treasures that lay underneath.

Sylvia suddenly felt her temperature rise, as if it was not hot enough already. She averted her gaze. Thomas did not seem to notice anything peculiar. After their food arrived, he made sure to move the spicy dishes to Sylvia's end of the table. All of a sudden, Sylvia gave a few dry coughs. Thomas looked at her with a queer gaze. "What's wrong?" Sylvia looked away and murmured with an air of embarrassment, "Um, could you fix your collar?"

Thomas inspected his collar and answered, "My collar is fine." Sylvia turned stiff for a moment as her eyes landed on his collar. They were still so revealing... Sylvia immediately lowered her head. "It's a little low. Could you pull it up?" Thomas made a slight grimace and informed her, "This shirt is designed like this. If you insist, then I will put my coat on." Sylvia hurriedly changed the topic. "No, no, it's fine. Let's eat." With that, she quickly picked up her spoon and went back to eating. Seeing this, Thomas did not reach for his coat and proceeded to eat as well. Perhaps it was a mixture of the already hot and humid room as well as the sheer spiciness of the Thai cuisine that Sylvia's face turned into a bright red hue by the time she was finished eating

Chapter 548

After they settled the bill, Sylvia grabbed her coat and walked outside

Thomas followed her. Suddenly, she felt the sensual touch of a finger gliding across her face, Sylvia was startled by this and cast a perplexed look at Thomas.

Thomas touched her face again, and this time said in a monotonous voice, "Your face is so red. Did you catch a fever?" Sylvia stammered, "I-I'm fine. Maybe it's because those dishes are too spicy."

Thomas looked at her warily. "Then, don't eat such spicy things next time." "Okay." Sylvia looked ahead again. "Let's go back to the academy." She sped up her pace and widened the gap between the two of them in the blink of an eye. While Thomas stayed where he was, his lips suddenly twitched as he looked at her fading figure.

Sylvia sat in her office for a long time before her face returned to a normal shade. She remembered that when she first married Odell, Thomas still had a thin buildup of baby fat on his face.

Now, he was no longer as boyish as he was in the past even though he still looked fairly young. He was several months older than her, so there was nothing wrong with him wearing a low cut shirt.

Perhaps she was too conservative and thought that she should stop treating Thomas like a child the way she once did.

After clearing her mind, she managed to calm down. She stopped troubling herself with these thoughts and proceeded to lay down on the table for a quick nap.

Downtown, on the top floor of Carter Tower, in Odell's office... Ding! The display glowed up and the caller ID flashed on the display. Odell took a quick look. It was his grandaunt Ramona calling. He answered and put the phone to his ear, "Hey, Grandaunt, what's the matter?" Ramona answered cheerfully, "Odell, the Springsteen family are moving back to the city in about half a month. Seeing as how Madam Springsteen grew up with me and your grandma, we are going to celebrate with a small party when we get back. After all, the Springsteens have had a lot of relations with your family in the past. Do you have time to join us?" Odell thought about it for a second and answered, "No."

It was true since he had a business trip in half a month.

"Can't you just spare a few hours? They care a lot about the relationship between your two families, and they will be very disappointed if you don't show up."

"I have a business trip around that time, so you can go in my place instead."

“But...”

“I still have work to do. See you for now.”

“Alright.”

Odell hung up promptly.

Meanwhile, at the Deckers', Ramona was sitting at a table with Madam Springsteen who was around the same age as her. Upon noticing Ramona putting away her phone, Madam Springsteen asked urgently.

“So? Is the Carter boy joining?”

Chapter 549

Ramona sighed exasperatedly and stared, “He says he’s got this business trip in half a month and won’t be able to make it.”

Madam Springsteen frowned sternly. “Even if he’s busy, I’m sure he can make time.” “He’s very career-focused. I can’t persuade him.” “I suppose it’s normal for him to be busy since he has to oversee the operations of a corporation all by himself.” Madam Springsteen considered it for a while and noted, “How about I discuss with the old man and see if we can change the date of the party two days earlier?”

Ramona sat up, then she asked with concern, “Will this disrupt your schedule?”

Madam Springsteen smiled and said, “No, it’s just two days earlier anyway.”

There were two reasons for their return this time. One was to develop their business in Westchester, and the other was to find a prospective partner for her darling granddaughter.

Her granddaughter had minimal interest in anyone in Westchester apart from Odell himself. Although Odell was married and had two children, he was already divorced by this point, and his ungrateful ex-wife was the one with full custody of the children. This meant that the children her granddaughter would eventually give Odell would be the rightful, legitimate recognized heirs of the Carters. As for that vile ex-wife of Odell, she had better not be harboring any sneaky ideas of pilfering even a single cent of the Carters’ assets. All of this was for the future happiness of her darling granddaughter, thus she would not mind moving the party a week earlier if she needed to. Ramona smiled optimistically. “Alright, once you have decided on a date, I will inform Odell again. I will persuade him to come to your party.”

“Thanks for the help.”

“You’re like a sister to me. No need for such formalities.”

“Have some tea. This is a locally sourced tea leaf that I brought to you from Loughton. Give it a try.”

Madam Springsteen picked up the teacup and offered. Ramona raised a teacup of her own and took a sip.

Her dislike for Sylvia had been brewing for a long time even though it turned out that they had wrongfully accused her of what happened to Madam Carter in the end. Regardless, it was her who had the audacity to file for a divorce with Odell and take custody of the children. Let their misery be a window of opportunity for the Springsteen girl to marry into the Carters. If everything bode out well, she would be the one to benefit most from all of this, since she was closely related to the Springsteens,

Odell's car arrived outside Sylvia's gate the first thing that morning. He must have found out that Liam and Isabel's winter break had just begun. The two kids always had fun every time they went out with Odell. Isabel craned her neck outside the windows in anticipation when she found out that her father was there

After Sylvia put on a thick padded jacket and a little hat for her, she shouted excitedly and almost impatiently, "Mommy, get dressed too. Let's go out and play together!" Sylvia patted her head and rejected the offer, "Mommy has some other things to take care of and can't go with you. Go ahead with your brother." Isabel perched her hands on the side of her hips and pouted angrily, "Why do you always have things to do?" "Be a good girl and go with your brother." Sylvia smiled and caressed her cheeks. Liam approached them and hooked his arm around Isabel's. "Come on, Sis. Let's go, Daddy said he's going to take us skiing today." Skiing?

Isabel's eyes lit up upon hearing this magical word. She snorted grumpily at Sylvia before turning to leave with Liam.

Sylvia stood behind the living room archway and watched as they ran through the front gate and climbed into the car. It was only after the car had driven off that she turned to get back to her tasks. She went to the studio and was about to mix her paints when her phone blared.

It was a text from Christopher. "Hey, Sylvia, the Springsteen family just moved back to Westchester. Master Springsteen is a known collector in the international art collectors scene and has been in touch with our Westchester Art Association. They said that they will be hosting a banquet next Wednesday to celebrate their relocation to Westchester and invited me and several other artists. The thing is, he is very fond of your work and named you specifically. I was wondering if you would have time to join us."

Springsteen? Master Springsteen? When Sylvia was young, she heard from her grandparents that the Springsteens in their heyday were comparable to the Carters. They ended up moving abroad because they wanted to expand the scope of their business in international markets. Sylvia's grandparents were not very close with the Springsteens. She remembered hearing her grandmother complaining about how haughty Madam Springsteen was, that she only had eyes for venerable families and had no respect for common folks like the Rosses. Still, her grandparents had some good things to say about Master Springsteen himself. Sylvia pondered for a while, trying to decide whether she should accept the invitation when Christopher sent her another message. "Hey, Master Springsteen just called me himself and said that he was really hoping to see you. Besides, there's going to be a lot of bigwigs showing up at the banquet, so I do hope you'll make an appearance as one of the representatives of our art association."

Since he put it that way. Sylvia had no ground to refuse anymore. She replied, "Alright, President. I'll be there"

Chapter 550

Later that evening, the evening glow basked over the earth and its lands. A black car was coasting down the highway. Inside the car was nothing but unfiltered silence as the driver destly steered the car.

In the back was a man leaning straight against the seat while he held a sleeping Isabel in his arms. Liam was seated to his right. The boy was also asleep, leaning against his shoulder. After a while, the car

stopped outside Sylvia's house. Odell gently woke Liam up and got out of the car, still carrying Isabel in his arms.

Aunt Tonya got out of the car after them. She took the still sleeping Isabel from Odell and said with a polite smile, "Master Carter, I'll take the children inside and won't be seeing you off, so goodbye."

With that, she turned around with Isabel in her arms. Liam rubbed his sleepy eyes and did not follow after her. Instead, he looked up at Odell. He stared mutely at Odell for a while before suddenly telling him, "If you want to see Mommy. just go right in." Odell frowned. "It's time for you to go in."

Liam scoffed, "Coward."

He walked into the house Odell was speechless. If it was not for the boy's quick escape, he would have grabbed him to teach him a lesson on manners.

Coward?

He wished he was a coward. If he had been a coward, he would not have hurt her so much. The reason he would not enter was to respect her wishes so that she would not be upset by the sight of him again. After the two kids entered the house, Odell turned and got back into the car.

The engine started with a low rumble.

Shortly after that, the phone in his pocket vibrated. It was Cliff. He put the phone to his ear and asked, "What's the matter?" Cliff reported dutifully, "Sir, the Springsteens have just sent an invitation. They are hosting a party to celebrate their move back to Westchester. It's next Wednesday."

"What's my schedule for next Wednesday?"

"You have two meetings on Wednesday. One of them is an international meeting."

Odell ended briskly. "Turn down the invitation."

Cliff hesitated for a moment before continuing in a low voice, "One more thing, sir. I was told that Master Springsteen has invited members of the Westchester Art Association, which includes Ms Sylvia as well. They say she has accepted the invitation"

Odell narrowed his eyes. After a moment, he instructed, "Postpone the two meetings by a day."

Cliff answered swiftly, "Consider it done."

Odell then hung up

Putting his phone away, he looked in the rearview mirror of the car.

They were some distance down the road from Sylvia's house, but he could still vaguely make out the shape of her house. If he was not mistaken, it had been two full months since the divorce when they last met.

Fast forward to Wednesday, Christopher sent a message to Sylvia first thing in the morning to remind her of the party at the Springsteens' later that night.

Sylvia prepared a simple dress that was fitting for the venue, then she spent the day at home with Isabel and Liam.

She changed into the dress and left in the evening. She first went somewhere near the academy to meet up with Christopher and the others. Then, they all carpoled together to the Springsteens. Their place was not far away. It was a very large piece of land and seemed more like a grand manor.